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CONAN
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KING
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FORCE OF ARMS

WHILE KING CONAN TOOK STOCK OF HIS VICTORY OVER THE PICTS IN WESTERMARCK, THE ALLIED ARMIES OF KING TARASCUS II OF NEMEDIA, QUEEN LEORA OF OPHIR, AND KING XANTAUS OF ARGOS SWEPT ACROSS AQUILONIA TO THE VERY GATES OF TARANTIA...

HAVE THE SIEGE EQUIPMENT IN POSITION BY DAWN TOMORROW OR I'LL HAVE YOU DRAWN AND QUARTERED BEFORE YOUR COMRADES!

SO, TELL ME, - LEORA, WHAT DO YOU AND TARASCUS THINK OF XANTAUS AS A FIELD COMMANDER NOW?

YOU DID WELL AGAINST THE AQUILONIAN ARMY ON THEIR EASTERN FRONTIER, XANTAUS.

BUT, WE STILL DO NOT KNOW THE DISPOSITION OF KING CONAN'S ARMY IN THE NORTH.

WRITER--DON KRAAR. PENCILER--MIKE DOCHERTY.
INKS--GEOF ISHERWOOD. COLORS--GEO. ROUSSOS.
LETTERS--JANICE CHIANG. EDITOR--LARRY HAMA.
ASSISTANT EDITOR--PAT REDDING.
COVER--MIKE KALUTA. ED-IN-CHIEF--JIM SHOOTER.

EVEN IF CONAN STILL LIVES, THESE COURIERS WILL NEVER REACH HIM.

AND IF CONAN LIVES, OUR FORCES OUTNUMBER HIS ALMOST TEN TO ONE.

I ALMOST HOPE HE DOES LIVE. I LONG TO CRUSH CONAN ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE.

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ON THE PARAPETS OF TARANTIA...

THEY CAPTURED ALL THREE OF OUR COURIERS, TROCERO. THOSE MEN ARE SUFFERING A CRUEL DEATH FOR THEIR VALOR.

WITH OUR GARRISON UNDER STRENGTH AND OUR FOOD SUPPLIES ALMOST EXHAUSTED, WE CANNOT HOLD OUT INDEFINITELY.

THEN WE MUST GET WORD TO MY FATHER.

WE WILL HAVE TO SEND OUT MORE MEN. MAY MITRA PROTECT THEM.

ONE MAN COULD GET THROUGH IF HE COULD SWIM THE KHOROTAS.

AYE, BUT IT'S A TASK BEST SUITED TO ORPHANS.

WE MUST TRY IT TONIGHT, BEFORE THE INVADERS CAN TIGHTEN THEIR GRIP AROUND THE CITY.

MY PRINCE, A WORD WITH YOU...

HADRATHUS--TELL ME, CAN YOUR GOD, ASURA, SAVE US?

ASURA CAN ONLY SHOW MEN THE MEANS TO SAVE THEMSELVES, MY PRINCE.

THERE IS A WAY OUT OF THE CITY KNOWN ONLY TO THE FOLLOWERS OF ASURA.

ONE DETERMINED MAN COULD ESCAPE TO CARRY WORD TO THE KING...

"... BY MEANS OF A LONG FORGOTTEN STORM DRAIN THAT EMPTIES INTO THE KHOROTAS."

HADRATHUS, LOOK AFTER MY MOTHER AND SISTER.

AYE, MY PRINCE. YOU MAY DEPEND ON ME.

REMIND THE KING THAT AS LONG AS THE FOLLOWERS OF ASURA HOLD THE JEWEL KNOWN AS THE HEART OF AHIRMAN IN TRUST FOR HIM, OUR ENEMIES CAN ONLY DEFEAT US BY FORCE OF ARMS.

MAY ASURA WATCH OVER YOU AND GUIDE YOU, MY PRINCE.

AND MAY ASURA WATCH OVER KING CONAN AND GUIDE HIM TO A SWIFT AND TIMELY RETURN.

NO COURIER MUST BE ALLOWED TO BREAK THROUGH OUR LINES. ANY MAN WHO FALLS ASLEEP AT HIS POST WILL BE PUT TO DEATH ON THE SPOT.

HALT! WHO GOES THERE?

IT IS ONLY I...

A PRIEST OF MITRA AND A FRIEND TO YOUR THREE MONARCHS...

I PRAY YOU SEND WORD TO THEIR ROYAL MAJESTIES...

...THAT *CRASSUS* HAS ARRIVED AS EXPECTED.

WHAT NEWS FROM WITHIN THE WALLS OF TARANTIA, CRASSUS?

THE CITY WILL BE YOURS FOR THE TAKING, IF ONLY YOU WAIT A LITTLE WHILE.

OUR FORCES WILL BE POISED FOR AN ASSAULT TOMORROW, CRASSUS.

HOLD FAST AND TARANTIA WILL DROP INTO YOUR OUTSTRETCHED HAND LIKE A PIECE OF RIPENED FRUIT DROPPING OFF THE VINE.

BUT OUR SOLDIERS HAVE TASTED WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BE CONQUERORS AND ARE SPOILING FOR A FIGHT.

THEN HOLD THEM IN CHECK UNTIL YOU NEED THEM. KING CONAN LIVES AND IS VICTORIOUS IN HIS WAR AGAINST THE PICTS.

HOW DID YOU COME BY SUCH INTELLIGENCE, CRASSUS?

BY ARCANE METHODS THAT YOU WOULD DO WELL NOT TO QUESTION, KING TARASCUS.

ALREADY TARANTIA IS FACED WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF STARVATION. THE FOLLOWERS OF ASURA ARE BLAMED FOR THE SHORTAGE OF FOOD AND SOON THE PEOPLE WILL CRY OUT FOR THEIR BLOOD.

NO ONE SUSPECTS OUR MERCHANT FRIENDS ARE HOARDING FOOD SUPPLIES IN THE FORGOTTEN REGIONS BENEATH THE CITY.

TOGETHER WITH THE SCIONS OF NOBLE HOUSES NO LONGER IN FAVOR SINCE KING CONAN SEIZED THE THRONE, WE ONLY WAIT FOR THE MOST PROPITIOUS HOUR TO SEIZE CONTROL OF TARANTIA.

THEN WE WILL ASSASSINATE THE ROYAL FAMILY, SEIZE THE JEWEL KNOWN AS THE HEART OF AHRIMAN, AND THROW OPEN THE GATES OF THE CITY TO YOUR ARMIES.

KEEP YOUR CAVALRY IN READINESS. YOU'LL NEED THEM WHEN THE HOUR ARRIVES.

VERY WELL, CRASSUS, WE WILL HEED YOUR ADVICE.

XANTAUS, DID YOU NOTICE THAT IN THE MOONLIGHT, CRASSUS LOOKS LIKE A STYGIAN.

THAT, LEORA, IS BECAUSE HE *IS* A STYGIAN.

THE PENALTY FOR SLEEPING ON YOUR POST...

...IS DEATH.

IN CRASSUS' APARTMENT IN THE TEMPLE OF MITRA...

BUT, THIS IS ALREADY MORE THAN WE BARGAINED FOR, CRASSUS. WHAT IF IT IS DISCOVERED THAT WE ARE HOARDING FOOD WHILE THE CITY STARVES?

IF YOU DON'T LOSE YOUR NERVE, IT WON'T BE DISCOVERED. BESIDES, THE PEOPLE HAVE THE ASURANS TO BLAME. SOON, THEY'LL BE TOO BUSY SLAUGHTERING THEM TO SUSPECT THE MERCHANT CLASS.

BUT, MUST WE ASSASSINATE THE ROYAL FAMILY?

ENOUGH, I TELL YOU!

YOU MEAN EXECUTE THE FAMILY OF THE USURPER, CONAN?--AYE, IF COUNT BARTHOLD IS TO ASSUME HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE ON THE THRONE OF AQUILONIA.

YOU WILL NOT FIND ME LACKING IN GRATITUDE TO THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED ME WELL.

NOW BE GONE I HAVE MUCH TO ATTEND TO AND I MUST ATTEND TO IT IN SOLITUDE

AND WHEN YOU HAVE SERVED YOUR PURPOSES AS I HAVE INTENDED I SHALL ATTEND TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU ONCE AND FOR ALL

FOR YOU ARE MERELY PAWNS IN MY DESTINY

AND YOU ARE HARDLY THE ONLY ONES.

ALREADY HALF GONE

YOU WERE NEVER LOVELIER THAN AS A HANDMAIDEN OF MITRA.

TELL ME HAVE YOUR PRAYERS FREED THE CHEF IN YOUR HEART OVER THE LOSS OF YOUR BELOVED OR HAVE THEY MERELY NUMBED IT IN ANY EVENT I FEAR YOU ARE QUITE USELESS

LET US SEE WHAT INTELLIGENCE MAY BE HAD OF YOUR FATHER, THE KING

MY LIEGE, THE CHIEFTAINS OF CIMMERIA AND ASGARD CRAVE AN AUDIENCE WITH YOU.

THEN SHOW THEM TO ME AND I WILL SPEAK TO THEM.

SO, KING CONAN, YOU HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED WORD OF THE INVASION OF AQUILONIA.

YOU DO ME GREAT HONOR TO OFFER ME THE LEADERSHIP OF YOUR ALLIANCE, BUT PRESENTLY I HAVE NO QUARREL WITH NEMEDIA. I DO NOT CARE FOR CONQUEST. AQUILONIA IS ENOUGH FOR ME.

KING CONAN, EVEN AS WE SPEAK, THE NATIONS OF NEMEDIA, BRYTHUNIA, AND HYPERBOREA ARE ARMING THEMSELVES FOR WAR

AYE, GREAT KING OF AQUILONIA, THE DAY MAY BE FAST APPROACHING WHEN THE ALLIANCE OF YOUR NATION WITH CIMMERIA AND ASGARD WILL BE OUR BEST HOPE FOR MUTUAL SURVIVAL.

YOU HAVE FAILED TO SEIZE THE MOMENT CONAN THE MOMENT THAT MIGHT HAVE SAVED YOUR KINGDOM.

SLEEP ON CONAN--SLEEP UNTIL YOU AWAKEN TO YOUR DOOM

O SET, SERPENT GOD OF MY FORE-FATHERS YOU WHO HAVE WATCHED THE MARCH OF DESTINY DOWN THROUGH THE AGES

REVEAL TO ME NOW THE PATTERN OF FATE...

AND HELP ME TO BE THE INSTRUMENT THAT FORGES AN AGE IN THY IMAGE TO SURPASS ANCIENT LEMURIA, ACHERON, AND OLD STYGIA!

CRASSUS, WHAT MANNER OF INVOCATION IS THIS?

DEXITHEUS YOU MEDDLING OLD FOOL SOON YOU TOO WILL LEARN TO BOW TO SET.

BLASPHEMY!

COME, RADEGUND. I'LL DELIVER YOU FROM THIS BLASPHEMER AND THEN I'LL DELIVER HIM IN IRONS TO THE QUEEN

WAIT, DEXITHEUS! YOU

AND THEN YOU WILL FEEL THEM ERE YOU DIE!

AND YOU

YOUR SORCERY WILL BE YOUR UNDOING, CRASSUS!

NOT BEFORE I HAVE UNDONE YOU!

AND TELL ME IF YOU CAN...

WHICH GOD'S MORE POWERFUL?

NOW FEEL THE COILS OF FLESH, DEXITHEUS!

ENOUGH...

THE ILLUSION HAS DONE ITS WORK

IT WAS THE FEAR IN YOUR HEART THAT KILLED YOU DEXITHEUS. THE ILLUSION THAT I CREATED WAS ONLY A CATALYST.

BONG!

YOU SUMMONED ME, BROTHER CRASSUS?

AYE. IT IS MY DUTY AS [illegible] TO BE THERE FOR MY BRETHREN

DEXITHEUS DIED BEFORE MY FIERY EYES, STRICKEN TO COURT BY THE SORCERY OF THE FOLLOWERS OF THE FALSE GOD ASURA

MITRA HELP US BROTHER CRASSUS, IT IS YOUR DUTY TO ACT IN DEXITHEUS' PLACE AS HIGH PRIEST

AYE, MY SOLEMN DUTY.

AND I WILL ATTEND TO IT.

AND THEN I WILL ATTEND TO THE [illegible] TAMANTIA

[illegible] THE ASURANS CITY

WE ARE FORTUNATE TO HAVE [illegible] SAVED DEXITHEUS AS HIGH PRIEST. MITRA BE PRAISED.

CRASSUS HAS BESEECHED THE QUEEN [illegible] INQUISITION TO DEAL WITH THE ASURANS WHO HAVE PERPETRATED THIS CRIME.

DEXITHEUS WAS SO MUCH A PART OF OUR LIVES IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT HE'S DEAD

AYE, MY QUEEN

I WAS LOST IN [illegible] THE FACT THAT HE [illegible] THAT HE WAS [illegible] FOREVER

CRASSUS DEMANDS AN AUDIENCE EVEN WHILE THE CITY'S BEING SET

EVEN IF OUR ENEMIES DO NOT [illegible] WE MAY WELL FIND [illegible] MY QUEEN

AND MY HEART WITHERS AND DIES, TROCERO, SINCE RADEGUND HAS TAKEN VOWS AS A HANDMAIDEN OF THE TEMPLE OF MITRA.

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HOW WILL I EVER TELL MY HUSBAND THAT OUR DAUGHTER HAS RENOUNCED HER NAME, HER TITLE AND HER FAMILY TO SERVE MITRA?

FORGIVE ME, MY QUEEN, BUT THERE ARE MORE URGENT MATTERS PRESSING US.

OUR COURIER FAILED TO BREAK THROUGH ENEMY LINES LAST NIGHT

BUT WE HAVE VOLUNTEERS READY TO TRY AGAIN TONIGHT.

COUNT TROCERO HADRATHUS PRIEST OF ASURA, CRAVES AN AUDIENCE WITH THE QUEEN AND THE KING'S REGENTS.

SHOW HIM IN THEN

YES, TROCERO, IT CANNOT BE DENIED.

OUR SUPPLIES OF FOOD WILL ONLY LAST ANOTHER FOUR WEEKS AT BEST.

MY QUEEN, I GIVE YOU MY SOLEMN WORD THAT THE FOLLOWERS OF ASURA HAD NO HAND IN THE DEATH OF DEXITHEUS SORCERY AND MURDER IS NOT OUR WAY.

I BEG YOU TO KEEP YOUR GUARD AGAINST CRASSUS WE MORGANS FEAR HIM AND YOU WOULD DO WELL TO DISTRUST HIM.

YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT EVEN AS WE SPEAK A COURIER IS ON HIS WAY TO THE KING

LAST NIGHT I SHOWED PRINCE CONN A WAY OUT OF THE CITY.

CONN!

WHAT?

AYE, THE PRINCE CARRIES THE WORD TO HIS FATHER AS A PLEDGE AGAINST HIS SAFE RETURN, I OFFER THIS

FOR THE PRINCE'S LAST HOPE

THE MEANT OF ANY MAN TAKE FROM MY [illegible]

On the road to Westermarck

MITRA THIS MOUNT HASN'T GOT A LEAGUE LEFT IN HIM!

FORWARD, HIS HORSE IS SPENT! LET'S TAKE HIM!

MITRA

MORE OF THEM AHEAD!

DEATH S COMING IN TWO D RECTIONS NOW BUT IT WON'T OVERTAKE ME EASILY

HOLD ON, BOY!

I KNOW THAT VOICE

GAIUS FLAVIUS!

GIVE THE NEMEDIAN CURS A TASTE OF AQUILONIAN STEEL!

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF THE PRINCE

COME ON, CONN, AND BE QUICK ABOUT IT!

I HEAR AND I OBEY GENERAL!

LIKE OLD TIMES EH CONN?

JUST LIKE WHEN I WAS A LITTLE BOY, GAILS RIDING DOUBLE WITH YOU

RETREAT!

I THOUGHT YOU WERE ON THE ZINJARAN BORDER GAIUS.

WE WERE, BUT BUSINESS HERE WAS MORE URGENT

WE'VE BEEN HARRYING THE INVADERS BUT FLYING AND RAIDING THEIR CAMPS BUT MY TWO LEGIONS AREN'T ENOUGH TO ENGAGE THEM IN THE FIELD.

MY FATHER WOULD APPROVE OF YOUR TACTICS, GAIUS

HE SAID I LEARNED TREASON FROM HIM

I'LL NEED A FRESH HORSE TO REACH MY FATHER

AND YOU'LL HAVE IT BUT I WANT YOU TO JOIN A DETACHMENT OF CAVALRY I WAS DISPATCHING TO THE KING.

YOU'LL KILL THESE AMOUNTS BY THE TIME YOU REACH THE KING. BRING HIM TO MARKET AND TELL HIM HE HAS OUR LOVE AND DEVOTION, CONN.

I WAS ALWAYS [illegible] GRATE

ON THE NORTHWESTERN POINT TO MEAG THE CIMMERIAN BORDER KING CONAN CONTINUES NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE CHIEFTAINS OF THE CIMMERIAN AND AESIR ALLIES

FOR GENERATIONS SLAVERS FROM NEMEDIA HYPERBOREA AND KOTH HAVE RAIDED THE BORDER NORTH

AYE I KNOW WELL ENOUGH.

AND IF THE CIMMERIANS ARE RIGHT

AND NEMEDIA OPHIR AND ARGOS HAVE FORMED AN ALLIANCE TO BOLSTER FOR AQUILONIA

AND WHEN THE TIME COMES IT

NO, RUFIO, BUT I FEAR YOU'RE GOING

GO ON, RUFIO, YOU HAVE MY LEAVE TO SPEAK.

CONN AND I HAVE WARNED YOU THAT THE

AND NOW YOU'RE LETTING THEM RIDE AWAY.

IF THE NORTH COUNTRIES MUST FACE AN ALLIANCE OF HYBORIAN KINGDOMS THEN THE BARBARIANS FACE ENLIGHTENMENT AND WEALTH

PROSPERO!

PREPARE THE TROOPS TO MARCH AT DAWN FOR TARANTIA.

I WAS BORN AN AMERIAN AND I AM BLOOD BROTHER TO THE BEAR, BUT AQUILONIA IS MY KINGDOM AND MY PEOPLE'S CONCERN

Later that night

WHEN THE MEN ARE RESTED, WE'LL MARCH THE MERCENARIES FOR THE ZINGARAN BORDER TO REINFORCE GAIUS FLAVIUS.

WELL, PROSPERO? GO ON, SPEAK YOUR MIND YOU'VE BEEN HOLDING SOMETHING BACK ALL DAY

YOU MADE A MISTAKE TODAY, CONAN. I PRAY TO MITRA IT WASN'T A FATAL ONE

SIRE!

ONE OF OUR SENTRIES.

COURIERS HAVE ARRIVED FROM GENERAL GAIUS FLAVIUS ON URGENT BUSINESS.

DON'T KEEP ME WAITING, SOLDIER

TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW.

AQUILONIA HAS BEEN INVADED, YOUR MAJESTY

AMONG THE COURIERS...

CONN

FATHER

TYRANT AJAX
[illegible] BY THE
ALMIGHTY ENEMEDIA
OF [illegible] AN ARMY
BY AN ADVANTAGEOUS
NUMBER THE CITY IS NOW
THE BRINK OF
STARVATION

WITH MY OWN
EYES I SAW THE
TRAITOR CRASSUS
CONSPIRE WITH OUR
ENEMIES THEY HAVE
MORE THAN THIRTY
LEGIONS IN
THEIR HOST

THIRTY
LEGIONS TO OUR
[illegible]

WE OWE
MUCH TO
OUR FRIEND
HAI RATHUS
AND THE
ASURANS

AND CAIUS
FLAVIUS SENDS
YOU HIS
DEVOTION

THEY ARE [illegible]
FRIENDS WE WILL [illegible]
MORE FRIENDS [illegible]
TODAY THEY

WELL, RUFIO, YOU CAN LOOK AT ME.

AFTER ALL, YOU WERE RIGHT

LIFE IS TOO SHORT FOR REGRETS. IT'S ALMOST DAWN. A NEW DAY IS BEGINNING AND WE MUST MEET IT ON ITS OWN TERMS.

SADDLE MY HORSE.

WE RIDE FOR THE CIMMERIAN ENCAMPMENT.

FROM THE GOLDEN AGE OF CONAN, PRINCE CONN & AMON HAGAN AND HIS ARMIES ARRIVE AT THE CIMMERIAN ENCAMPMENT.

FATHER, I STILL SAY WE SHOULD HAVE BROUGHT TROOPS. WE MAY HAVE RIDDEN INTO A TRAP

NO, CONN, ANY SHOW OF FORCE WOULD BE SEEN AS A SIGN OF DISTRUST WE HAVE TO SHOW GOOD FAITH.

AND HOPE THEY DO THE SAME

IF YOU DON'T LIKE OUR PREPARATIONS THEN CHOOSE A NEW LEADER AND LET HIM OFFEND HIS CLAIM WITH IRON

IF THE KINGDOMS OF NEMEDIA, OPHIR, AND ARGOS CAN FORGE A SUCCESSFUL ALLIANCE, WHY CAN'T WE ?

ALL OUR FINE WORDS HAVE NOT SLAIN ONE ENEMY BICKERING IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP

WE NEED TIME TO PLOT OUR STRATEGY

AYE. WELL SAID MY SON HAS BROUGHT WORD OF THE INVASION OF AQUILONIA BY THE NATIONS YOU WARNED ME AGAINST. I AM HERE TO STAKE MY CLAIM TO THE LEADERSHIP OF YOUR ALLIANCE.

YOU'VE COME TOO LATE CONAN WE HAVE FOUND A LEADER.

I, ROLF, SON OF ASGARD HAVE BEEN NAMED WAR CHIEF!

THEN SHOW YOURSELF TO BE A REAL LEADER AND STEP ASIDE FOR A BETTER MAN

WHERE IS SUCH A MAN?

WELL! NO IRON

COLD STEEL SEPARATES HEROES FROM BRAGGARTS AND THE LIVING FROM THE DEAD.

REMEMBER, THE FIGHT IS TO THE DEATH.

AND YOU MUST PLEDGE THE KINSMEN OF THE VANQUISHED WILL SEEK NO VENGEANCE ON THE VICTOR.

YOU HEARD THE OLD CHIEFTAIN IF I FALL IN COMBAT YOU MUST TAKE NO ACTION NOW OR EVER

BY CROM AND YMIR THIS IS BARBARIAN LAND AND WE'LL ABIDE BY BARBARIAN LAW

BY CROM AND YMIR, THIS IS BARBARIAN LAND AND WE'LL ABIDE BY BARBARIAN LAW.

I, CONAN, SON OF CIMMERIA AND KING OF AQUILONIA, PLEDGE THAT MY KINSMEN WILL SEEK NO VENGEANCE IF I FALL. I BEAR YOU NO MALICE, ROLF.

THE LAW THAT BINDS BOTH OUR PEOPLES REQUIRES THAT YOU MAKE YOUR PLEDGE FOR ALL TO HEAR.

I, ROLF, SON OF ASGARD AND CHIEFTAIN OF MY CLAN PLEDGE THAT MY KINSMEN WILL SEEK NO VENGEANCE IF I FALL, I BEAR YOU NO MALICE, CONAN.

TO THE DEATH!

YAHEEEEHAH...

AHHHEEE!

IT LOOKS TO BE A FAIR MATCH, EAMON.

BUT FOR THE FACT THAT ROLF IS TWENTY YEARS YOUNGER THAN CONAN

AGHEEE!

UGH!

I'VE NEVER SEEN YOUR FATHER SO HARD PRESSED, CONN.

AYE, EAMON I'VE SEEN SINGLE COMBATS BUT NEVER LIKE THIS.

HOW WOULD THEY FIGHT IF THEY DID BEAR EACH OTHER MALICE?

CROM IS BEING WELL ENTERTAINED.

YOU CAN'T LAST, CONAN YOU'RE TWENTY YEARS OLDER THAN I AM

AND TWENTY YEARS MEANER!

YOU RE AN OLD MAN CONAN

JUST OLD ENOUGH TO PUT YOU IN YOUR PLACE

ONE OF US WILL BE IN VALHALLA BEFORE THIS DAY ENDS

THEN I'LL MAKE SURE IT ISN'T ME.

UHHH.

AGHEEE!

SON OF CIMMERIA, YOU'VE LIVED TOO LONG AMONG CIVILIZED MEN.

YOUR CLAIM TO THE LEADERSHIP OF THE WARRIORS OF CIMMERIA AND ASGARD MUST BE SEALED IN

YOU KNOW OUR LAW. ON ANOTHER DAY WE MIGHT HAVE BEEN COMRADES. NOW DON'T LET ME LIVE A CRIPPLE.

CROM...

STRIKE AND REMEMBER I WOULD HAVE DONE THE SAME FOR YOU.

...WHAT A BITTER, MERCILESS WORLD YOU SPAWNED.

UGHH...

THE EARTH WILL RUN RED BEFORE THIS BUSINESS IS DONE.

QUICKLY, SIGURD, CAST THE RUNES IN THE DEAD MAN'S BLOOD. THERE IS NO STRONGER PORTENT OF THE FUTURE.

NOW, LET THE GODS REVEAL OUR DESTINY.

WHAT IS THE MESSAGE OF THE RUNES?

CONQUEST!

CONQUEST!

CONQUEST!

IF I AM TO LEAD YOU THEN SWEAR FEALTY TO ME...

AND TO MY HEIRS!

AND MAKE OUR BATTLE CRY CONQUEST OR DEATH!

CONQUEST OR DEATH!

CONTINUED IN ISSUE # 52!
JUGGERNAUT

KING CONAN

℅ MARVEL COMICS GROUP
387 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10016

LARRY HAMA
EDITOR
PAT REDDING
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Attention correspondents: If you don't want your full address printed, please be sure to tell us so!

Dear Marvel,

I have been a Conan fan for years. When I read CONAN THE KING #28, I was impressed as always. The art was great, and a story to match. I am in the Air Force, and everyone in my section agrees. Conan is the best, and "Long Live The King."

AIC Larry Lauger
Anderson AFB Guam

Dear Cimmerians,

CONAN THE KING #29 was MARVELous. George Roussos did a super job. I admire Mr. Silvestri's pencils. But I did notice a slight but important mistake. When King Xantaus met with Queen Leora, his sword was on his left side. But on the next page, his sword was on his right side. Do I get a Marvel No-Prize?

Jonathan Buhl
5309 Rowan Rd.
Knoxville, TN 37912

Just because Xantaus wears loose belts? You're kidding, right?

Dear Conans,

King Conan is a hunk! He's the best looking 60-year-old around. The last page of issue #29 was gorgeous! Conan in full battle armor! YUM! Well, until Conan dies. Make Mine Marvel!

Jenny Black
Queens, NY

Dear KING CONAN crew,

CONAN THE KING #29 is the best Conan comic I have ever read. And it is in my all-time top five. I am glad that Conn finally came home; it couldn't be a better time.

It's about time that Conan had a real challenge. The artwork and storyline are fantastic. I am definitely going to resubscribe to CONAN THE KING. Keep up the good work.

Gregory Lowe
RD #1
Milford, NJ 08848

Dear Larry,

Re: "Call of The Wild" in CONAN THE KING #28. If nothing else Sonja's certainly aged well, a regular Hyborean Joan Collins, still fresh of face, firm of breast, and not a trace of grey in the fiery red mane. I find this a bit hard to swallow, considering that she and Conan were approximately the same age when they first met during the seige of Makkalet roughly twenty years before, and he now looks as crinkled as an autumn leaf. Also, by my reckoning, Sonja's been wearing that costume for fifteen years; no wonder no man will touch her. Which brings me to my next point.

I was very surprised and disappointed to find Sonja still spouting her vow of chastity (or at least implying that she still abides by it). Sheesh, guys, twenty years have passed and there I was hoping that Louise Simonson was preparing to scrap the damn thing in Sonja's own magazine; evidently not.

Still, that aside, I really did enjoy the story and the art was just that, art. Indeed, Sonja hasn't looked so good since the Chaykin days.

Richard Toodgood
London, England

Dear Readers, Larry, Pat,

Do you enjoy CONAN THE KING? Of course! Don't you agree that two months is too long to wait between issues? Of course! Go monthly! We, the readers, deserve it! (Fellow Readers, write in and demand a monthly CONAN THE KING!)

This isn't just another senseless request (demand) to go monthly; if some artist changes are made, it should be possible. Get a new penciller (Marc Silvestri is great, but since he's Moving On to a new project . . .). I suggest Mike Docherty or Jerry Bingham (who I prefer because of his experience at First, which shows he can handle a monthly schedule and do stunning sword-and-sorcery). Geoff Isherwood should stay as inker (best inker CONAN has ever had), because he couldn't do full art monthly. These changes should allow for a monthly format, and also keep the quality up.

Finally, I'd like to say that Don Kraar made a good debut as a writer. In a few years, he might be as good as Alan Zelenetz.

Remember, fellow readers, write in your support for the monthly format!

Oh, by the way, to go monthly, CONAN THE KING would have to shift down to the regular 22 page format.

Scott Tilson
123 Vista Drive
Streetsville, Ontario
Canada L5M 1W2

Dear Fellas,

CONAN THE KING #30 was unto Crom. I was so shocked to see the Black Dragon slaughtered, but this does prove for an interesting storyline. Call me crude, but I was overjoyed to see Shooz Dinj loose his head. Stuff like this makes CONAN THE KING my favorite comic. By the way, as usual, the artwork was superb.

Steven Buccellato
NYC

Dear Marvel,

Wow is all I can say!! I just received my first issue of CONAN THE KING through the mail (#30). The artwork was stupendous!! Mike Docherty and Geoff Isherwood are the best tandem since Buscema and Ernie Chan. Keep up the good work!! The fight scenes are among the best ever!!

Allen Schmeerle
Kentucky

Dear Folks,

Alright! Conn is back! It's about time, too. I loved the 'magic trick' Rufio played ('trick,' get it?). The looks on Conan and Zenobia's faces were *perfect!* And the words Rufio used! . . . I almost fell out of my seat laughing! I assume we'll find out how he learned these 'magic' words sometime in the future (being rather new to CONAN THE KING, I may have already missed the explanation).

If Leora looked any more the Dominating Whips-and-Chains type, this book would've never passed the code! I LOVE IT! It's so totally off-the-wall. She treats Tarascus totally in character. Also totally in character was the captain's following through on the young mother's request.

Shooz Dinj is a really nasty-looking fellow! Oh, and one last thing — did the picts get caught in a rainstorm? The picts I know always wore blue body-paint!

Justin Malbert
32 West End Lane
Hampstead, MD

Dear Larry,

On this auspicious occasion I write to you concerning CONAN THE KING #29.

I am impressed at how far above most other sword-and-sorcery comics CTK is. I loved the stark, sharp quality of the art, the broad, pseudo wide-angle vistas, and the attention to detail, especially in the clothing.

The research done on court relationships is gratifying to see. Particularly in the scene between Rufio and Conan where Rufio is allowed to publicly poke fun at Conan. This was in fact one of the functions of the court jester, to be the conscience of the King, to say that which no one else would dare to.

I would like to make a point of praising Roussos for his excellent, mood-inducing colors (colorists get far too little credit, I feel).

It is refreshing to see violence in comics (and by this I do not mean the slapstick fights one sees in the main line. I mean DEATH); when I read a comic I want an escape. To see someone who imposes and maintains order on his world by violence is uplifting and relieves much of my pent-up frustration with our confusing world.

The interrelationship of the characters is also interesting. A great deal of color is interjected into the story by the vehicle of their different motivations which add a subtext vital to any memorable story.

I must once more applaud the staff for the hard work they have obviously put into this book. Seldom do you find this kind of care or attention to detail. Keep up the good work.

Norbert Sykes
Barnveld, Wisconsin

Thanks, Norbert, for your heartfelt and articulate letter. We do our best here at Marvel to put as much care and attention to detail as we can into all our books.

And, while we're on the subject, we can't help but mention that nowhere will you find more of these qualities than in the Shooter / Milgrom / Leialoha Grand Magnum Opus, SECRET WARS II! We're sure that you'll be impressed at the intensity of enthusiasm for this book that Jim, Al, and Steve are bringing to every page. We know we are.

Next: Juggernaut!

BULLPEN BULLETINS

"A Non-Radioactive Reply To Jim Shooter

Greetings, patrons of the comic arts! Bob Layton here. Most of you dedicated Marvel readers probably know me from my stint on *Iron Man* (with David Michelinie), or from my contribution as writer / artist on the two successful Hercules Limited Series. Or, perhaps, you've heard tell of me in this very column. You see, for years now in this column, you've been treated to Jim's constant harrassment of me. He has accused me of being a radioactive nuclear terrorist clone — he has informed the general public that I am, in truth, a xerox-replicated entity — he created the bogus organization B.L.A.D.D.E.R.S. (*B*ob *L*ayton *A*nti-*D*efamation and *D*efense *E*lite *R*evenge *S*quad) which, while ineptly "defending" me, actually caused me further embarassment — and to make matters worse, in Mark Gruenwald's question of the month feature, he casts aspersions on my relationship with the Law-Enforcement authorities! But the last straw was when he tried to get rid of me in the fraudulent "Win a Dream Date with Bob Layton Contest!" (I wound up with twin Rumanian sisters who had moustaches thicker than Stan Lee's! I didn't even know anyone in Rumania read Marvel Comics!)

Well, I've had it, Big Guy! Now — the gloves are *off!* Let me tell you readers a few intimate details about my pal, my close personal friend — Jim Shooter!

"Not Fit For Print"

Okay, Jim — I know there are certain facts about your personal life you'd rather I not mention. Fair enough! After all, you are the official representative of the largest, most successful comics company in the world and you deserve the respect that comes with that position. So I've decided not to mention the time I talked you into

CENSORED

Don't worry, Jim, I wouldn't dream of saying a thing about any of that stuff.

"Mr. Marvel Vs. The Media"

Jim, in my opinion, gets a bad break from the fan press. They call him "opinionated," "stubborn" and "thick-headed" — and they even say a few things that *aren't* true! But soon, Marvel readers will be able to discover the whole story about his relationship with the fan press in Jim's soon-to-be-released autobiography entitled — *"I'm Okay . . . You're Scum!"*

"Better Homes and Garbage"

Jim Shooter is a man of many talents. One of them, however, is not housekeeping. On more than one occasion, I've visited Jim at his "Luxury Condo" in midtown Manhattan. His home can best be described like this: Imagine a four hundred foot tall bag lady. Then, imagine her bag tearing, the contents of which lands indiscriminately around the whereabouts of our Editor in Chief. Jim remains unaffected by all the clutter, being consumed by the dedication to his job. When I visited him last April, I exclaimed, "Aren't you ever going to clean up this place?" Jim replied, "Why bother? My mother is coming to visit in July. She'll tidy it up!"

"We're very proud of our Editor In Chief!"

Well . . . I feel so much better, having gotten this off my chest. And despite his little faults, he's been the best friend any radioactive terrorist could ask for. I only hope that, now, we can bury the hatchet and get on with being two and a half of the most creative urbanites in the comics industry. "What do you say, Big Guy?"

BOB LAYTON

"Now back to Jim Shooter"

Thank you, Bob. And now, it's my great pleasure to announce — The Mighty Marvel "Take a Radioactive Terrorist Xerox Replicant to Lunch in Rumania Contest!" Details in next month's Bullpen Bulletins.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ **THE THING #29**
- ☐ **DAREDEVIL #224**
- ☐ **NEW MUTANTS #33**
- ☐ **WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #8**
- ☐ **WEST COAST AVENGERS #2** — Continuing the cross-over with *Vision and Scarlet Witch!*
- ☐ **CLOAK AND DAGGER #3**
- ☐ **RED SONJA: THE MOVIE (Limited Series) #1** — Beginning the official Marvel adaptation by LOUISE SIMONSON and MARY WILSHIRE!
- ☐ **RAWHIDE KID (Limited Series) #4**
- ☐ **SQUADRON SUPREME (Limited Series) #3**
- ☐ **QUESTPROBE (Limited Series) #3** — Featuring the Thing and the Human Torch in the latest adventure in the SCOTT ADAMS computer game series!
- ☐ **CONAN THE KING #31**
- ☐ **LIFE OF CAPTAIN MARVEL (Limited Series) #4** — Reprinting the late Captain's life, as told by JIM STARLIN.
- ☐ **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #270**
- ☐ **CAPTAIN AMERICA #311**
- ☐ **POWER PACK #16**
- ☐ **MICRONAUTS #14**
- ☐ **ALPHA FLIGHT #28** — Not only is this a *Secret Wars II* issue, it's also a startling cross-over with *Incredible Hulk #313!*
- ☐ **INDIANA JONES #32**
- ☐ **DAZZLER #40** — A *Secret Wars II* cross-over!
- ☐ **RED SONJA #11** — The comic!
- ☐ **LONGSHOT (Limited Series) #3**
- ☐ **VISION AND SCARLET WITCH (Limited Series) #2** — Concluding the cross-over with the *West Coast Avengers!*
- ☐ **AVENGERS ANNUAL #14** — The Skrulls are lurking in this cross-over with the *FF Annual #14!*
- ☐ **INCREDIBLE HULK #313** — This is it! The ultimate cross-over with *Alpha Flight #28!*
- ☐ **AVENGERS #261** — Will the Beyonder become an Avenger in this *Secret Wars II* cross-over?
- ☐ **CONAN THE BARBARIAN #176**
- ☐ **MARVEL TALES #161** — Reprinting "Birth of a Hero," by STAN LEE and JOHN ROMITA, SR., from *Amazing Spider-Man #42.*
- ☐ **ROM #72** — A *Secret Wars II* cross-over!
- ☐ **X-MEN #199**
- ☐ **MOON KNIGHT #5**
- ☐ **POWER MAN / IRON FIST #120**
- ☐ **SOLOMON KANE (Limited Series) #2**
- ☐ **BALDER THE BRAVE (Limited Series) #1** — From the pages of *Thor* and into his own series!
- ☐ **G.I. JOE #41**
- ☐ **NIGHTCRAWLER (Limited Series) #1** — The adventures of that world famous X-Man, as told by DAVE COCKRUM!
- ☐ **ETERNALS (Limited Series) #2**
- ☐ **FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL #19** — The Skrulls aren't the only villains in this cross-over with the *Avengers Annual #14!*
- ☐ **PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #108**
- ☐ **DEFENDERS #149**
- ☐ **FANTASTIC FOUR #284** — With the *last appearance* of the Invisible Girl!
- ☐ **STAR WARS #101**
- ☐ **THOR #361**
- ☐ **TRANSFORMERS #10**
- ☐ **SECRET WARS II (Limited Series)#5** — The Beyonder plunges into the dark side of humanity, and the world trembles! Featuring Doctor Strange, the Thing, Fantastic Four, and the East and West Coast Avengers!
- ☐ **IRON MAN #200** — Special double-sized anniversary issue that answers the question, "Who will wear the armor?"
- ☐ **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL #19** — You won't believe what happens when Mary Jane is suspected of being Spider-Man!
- ☐ **THE OFFICIAL MARVEL INDEX TO THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #8** — Everything you need to know to be an expert on *Amazing Spider-Man #175-199!*
- ☐ **DOCTOR WHO #14**

EPIC COMICS

- ☐ **DREADSTAR AND COMPANY #5**
- ☐ **MOONSHADOW (Limited Series) #4**
- ☐ **SWORDS OF THE SWASHBUCKLERS #3** — Mutiny!
- ☐ **GROO THE WANDERER #9**
- ☐ **BLACK DRAGON (Limited Series) #5**
- ☐ **THE ONE (Limited Series) #2** — One meets the Other!
- ☐ **ELFQUEST #4**
- ☐ **COYOTE #14**
- ☐ **EPIC ILLUSTRATED #32** — "The Cerebus Portfolio" by DAVE SIM, plus more graphic adventures by BYRNE & AUSTIN, GOODWIN & GELDOFF, BRYANT & KIMBALL, WHEATLEY and CONRAD!

STAR COMICS

- ☐ **PLANET TERRY #8** — Prisoners on Alphatraz!
- ☐ **PETER PORKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-HAM #4**
- ☐ **EWOKS #4** — Trapped in the castle of the Ice Witch!
- ☐ **WALLY THE WIZARD #8**
- ☐ **ROYAL ROY #4** — Engaged to Lorna Loot! Yuk!
- ☐ **MUPPET BABIES #4**
- ☐ **GETALONG GANG #4** — Meet Wellington Wombat — the most dangerous kid in Green Meadow!

MARVEL MAGAZINES

- ☐ **MARVEL AGE #32**
- ☐ **MARVEL FANFARE #23** — The end of the Iron Man adventure written by McKENZIE, painted by STEACY!
- ☐ **SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #117**
- ☐ **SAVAGE TALES #1** — It's back and more savage than ever!

GRAPHIC NOVEL

- ☐ **GN #18: SHE-HULK** — Romance with Wyatt Wingfoot, action with SHIELD! By JOHN BYRNE, inked by KIM DeMULDER.